

## The Random Jottings of Donald Jay in Nelson in Pendle.

The last sale of a wife by auction in this neighbourhood took place on the steps of the Market Cross, in the presence of a large crowd, at Colne May Fair, in 1814. The bidding for the woman was spirited, and she was at length knocked down to a man at the Castle for a few pounds. Directly she heard the result of the sale whether actuated by fear or modesty is not recorded she rushed away at full speed down Windy Bank, and being nimble, ran some distance before her pursuers overtook her.

In the quaint village of Colne, nestled amidst the picturesque countryside, there existed a tradition that had long stirred controversy and ignited the imaginations of those who heard of it. It was the infamous practice of wife auctions, an event that seemed like a relic of a bygone era. The year was 1814, and Colne May Fair was about to witness its last sale of a wife by auction. The townsfolk gathered eagerly around the Market Cross, their eyes filled with curiosity and anticipation. The air was filled with whispers and hushed conversations as they awaited the commencement of this peculiar spectacle. The atmosphere was charged with a mix of excitement and unease, for they knew this event would be etched in the annals of their village's history.

Among the crowd, there stood a woman, her name forgotten in the passage of time, yet her fate forever imprinted on the pages of local lore. She was a figure of mystery, draped in a shroud of uncertainty. Her expression was a blend of trepidation and resignation, perhaps aware of the disquieting destiny that awaited her.

As the auctioneer ascended the steps of the Market Cross, the crowd fell silent. The proceedings commenced, and the bidding began with an unexpected vigor. Men raised their hands, their voices echoing through the square, vying for ownership of this unfortunate woman. The auctioneer's rhythmic chants filled the air, fueling the fervor that had taken hold of the onlookers.

The bidding escalated swiftly, each offer seemingly eclipsing the last. Spectators gasped, some showing visible signs of disapproval, while others eagerly embraced the scandalous nature of the event. The final moments of the auction arrived, and the woman's fate teetered precariously on the precipice.

Then, with a resounding thud of the auctioneer's gavel, the sale was concluded. The woman was sold to a man at the Castle, his victorious bid a mere sum of a few pounds. The crowd erupted into a cacophony of applause and murmurs, acknowledging the conclusion of this controversial event.

As the woman heard the result of the auction, a surge of emotions coursed through her veins. Fear and indignation intertwined within her, overwhelming any sense of propriety. Without hesitation, she broke free from the clutches of those surrounding her and sprinted down Windy Bank, her feet pounding against the cobblestones.

Driven by a potent blend of desperation and determination, she raced forward with a relentless energy. The wind whispered through her hair, urging her onward as she dashed through the verdant countryside. Her nimble figure weaved through the meandering paths, distancing herself from her pursuers.

Behind her, a commotion erupted as the realization of her escape settled upon those who sought to reclaim her. They gave chase, their feet pounding heavily against the ground, fueled by a mix of duty and the urgency to capture their runaway prize.

Yet, the woman's desperation propelled her forward, and she surged ahead, unyielding to the fatigue that threatened to seize her. She pushed her body to the limit, finding reserves of strength she never knew existed.

As the distance between her and her pursuers grew, a glimmer of hope flickered within her weary soul. She knew that her journey was not yet over, that there were many challenges still ahead. However, in that fleeting moment, she reveled in the taste of freedom, relishing the exhilaration of evading the clutches that had bound her.

And so, the woman disappeared into the mists of history, leaving behind a tale of resilience and defiance. Her story echoed through the generations, a testament to the strength of the human spirit and a reminder of the injustices that were once endured. The last

By Donald Jay